

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 001560

62

ORIGIN AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EUR-12 AID-05 /068 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:RSBARRETT:JR

APPROVED BY AF/E:WBCOOTE

----- 056808

R 032308Z JAN 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 001560

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ET, SU

SUBJECT: SUDANESE REQUEST FOR INFO ON ETHIOPIAN
DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) KHARTOUM 0004 (B) KHARTOUM 2840

1. REGARDING SPECIFIC QUERIES BY AHMED (REF B) WE HAVE
NO RELIABLE INFORMATION CONCERNING MENGHISTU'S "EXTREMISM"
OR REASONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF AYALEW MANDEFRO AS
MINISTER OF DEFENSE WHILE HIS COUSIN KETTEME YIFRU REMAINS
IN JAIL. SUGGEST EMBASSY ADDIS PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION
AVAILABLE DIRECTLY TO KHARTOUM.

2. FOR KHARTOUM'S INFORMATION THERE FOLLOWS EXCERPTS
FROM RECENT INTERNAL DEPARTMENT BRIEFING MEMORANDA
CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN ERITREA.

3. VIOLENCE ERUPTS IN ERITREA. THE RECENT ARRIVAL IN
ERITREA OF ELEMENTS OF THE ETHIOPIAN FIRST DIVISION,
FORMERLY STATIONED IN ADDIS ABABA, HAS LED TO AN UPSURGE
OF VIOLENCE IN THE CITY OF ASMARA AND THE SURROUNDING
AREA. ON DECEMBER 22 GRENADE EXPLOSIONS AND SHOOTING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 001560

BY ELF INSURGENTS CAUSED SIX DEATHS, AND THERE WAS A

REPORTED CLASH WITH ELF ELEMENTS OUTSIDE OF THE TOWN. ON DECEMBER 23 SEVEN MORE PERSONS INCLUDING ONE WOMAN, DIED

FROM GUN SHOT WOUNDS. ON DECEMBER 24 SEVEN CORPSES WERE FOUND IN ASMARA OF WHICH SIX HAD BEEN STRANGLED WITH PLAIN WIRE, AND ONE STABBED. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF ADDITIONAL VIOLENCE, INCLUDING THE STRANGLING OF 18 MORE PERSONS. FOUR MORE EXPLOSIONS AND GUNFIRE OCCURRED ON JANUARY 2. THE INDIVIDUALS FOUND KILLED IN ASMARA FIT INTO NO SINGLE PATTERN AND MAY REPRESENT RANDOM KILLING BY THE ETHIOPIAN FORCES TO INTIMIDATE THE POPULATION.

4. THE PMG HAS AGREED TO A DEMAND MADE BY THIRTY-EIGHT ERITREAN LEADERS THAT IT HOLD TALKS WITH THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT (ELF). THE THIRTY-EIGHT LEADERS IN QUESTION WERE AMONG THE MORE THAN THREE HUNDRED, PRESUMABLY NON-ELF, ERITREAN COMMUNITY LEADERS WITH WHOM A SPECIAL PMG DELEGATION FROM ADDIS ABABA HAD BEEN MEETING IN ASMARA SINCE DECEMBER 28, AFTER A WEEK OF INCREASING RANDOM VIOLENCE IN THE CITY PERPETRATED BY BOTH THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY AND ELF SYMPATHIZERS

5. THE PRESENT ATMOSPHERE WOULD NOT BE CONDUCIVE TO THE SUCCESS OF PMG/ELF TALKS. EARLIER THIS YEAR, WHEN THE MILITARY FIRST MOVED TO DIVEST EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE OF MOST OF HIS POWER, THERE WAS HOPE THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT WOULD FACILITATE A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THE ERITREAN PROBLEM, AS THE ELF HAD BEEN MORE ANTI-IMPERIAL THAN ANTI-ETHIOPIAN AND HAD DEEPLY RESENTED THE HAILE SELASSIE'S GOVERNMENT'S CONCEPTION OF THE ELF'S STRUGGLE AS SIMPLY A MILITARY PROBLEM. THESE HOPES WERE FURTHER RAISED BY THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ERITREAN AS PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR ON AUGUST 24 AND BY THE ELEVATION OF GENERAL AMAN TO THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP ON SEPTEMBER 12. BUT ON OCTOBER 15, AN ELF SPOKESMAN IN BEIRUT NOTED THAT THE NEW REGIME WAS NOT DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD ONE AS IT STILL REPRESENTED DOMINATION BY THE MINORITY AMHARIC ETHNIC GROUP OVER OTHER "NATIONAL GROUPS." THE FAILURE OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE ANY ELF PRISONERS, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 001560

ALTHOUGH IT HAD FREED OTHER POLITICAL DETAINEES, ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS PESSIMISTIC APPRAISAL BY THE ELF.

6. THE KILLING OF GENERAL AMAN BY HIS PMG COLLEAGUES ON NOVEMBER 23 MUST HAVE REMOVED ANY HOPE THE ELF MIGHT HAVE SECRETLY HELD THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MORE FORTHCOMING WITH REGARD TO ERITREA. ONE OF THE ISSUES WHICH LED TO THIS EVENT WAS WHETHER TO REINFORCE THE

GOVERNMENT'S MILITARY CAPACITY IN ERITREA, A STEP WHICH AMAN HAD OPPOSED AS IT MIGHT JEOPARDIZE THE CHANCES FOR NEGOTIATIONS. SINCE HIS DEATH THE PMG HAS GONE AHEAD WITH THE REINFORCEMENTS, PRODUCING THE PRESENT PRECARIOUS SITUATION IN ASMARA AND THE SURROUNDING AREA.

7. ON THE GOVERNMENT SIDE THE PROSPECT OF SUCCESSFUL TALKS WOULD DEPEND UPON WHETHER IT IS WILLING TO GRANT ERITREA ANY MEANINGFUL DEGREE OF AUTONOMY. AT PRESENT THERE ARE INCREASING SIGNS OF INTRANSIGENT TOWARD THE ELF IN THE PMG, THE NEGOTIATIONS IN ASMARA WHICH BEGAN ON DECEMBER 28 REPRESENTING ONLY AN EFFORT TO DEAL WITH THE RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE. BUT FURTHER DETERIORATION OF SECURITY MIGHT INFLUENCE THE PMG TOWARD GREATER FLEXIBILITY.

8. ON THE ELF SIDE PROSPECTS FOR FRUITFUL NEGOTIATIONS DEPEND UPON WHETHER IT IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT ANYTHING SHORT OF INDEPENDENCE. IT HAS PUBLICLY STATED THAT IT WILL NOT AND ON DECEMBER 27 AN ELF SPOKESMAN IN BEIRUT SAID IT WAS PREPARING TO START FULL SCALE WARFARE. BUT IF THE ELF BECAME CONVINCED THAT THE PMG WAS SERIOUS ABOUT NEGOTIATING, IT MIGHT BE WILLING TO SETTLE FOR SOME FORM OF AUTONOMY OR FEDERATION. IT IS LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WOULD BE A STRONG TENDENCY WITHIN ELF TO REGARD THIS ONLY AS A STEPPING STONE TO EVENTUAL INDEPENDENCE. THE ERITREAN POPULATION MAY WELL BE WILLING TO SETTLE FOR LESS THAN INDEPENDENCE IN EXCHANGE FOR PEACE. THEY DID ONCE BEFORE, IN 1952. A DISCREET GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN OF CONCILIATION TOWARD THE ERITREAN POPULATION, WHILE NEGOTIATIONS ARE GOING ON, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 001560

MIGHT THEREFORE IMPROVE THE PROSPECTS FOR COMPROMISE ON THE INDEPENDENCE ISSUE. KISSINGER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SITREP, INDEPENDENCE, LIBERATION RONTs, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE001560
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RSBARRETT:JR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750004-0358
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750178/aaaacqvx.tel
Line Count: 156
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 KHARTOUM 0004, 75 KHARTOUM 2840
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 AUG 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <16 SEP 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUDANESE REQUEST FOR INFO ON ETHIOPIAN DEVELOPMENTS
TAGS: PFOR, ET, SU, ELF, (MANDEFRO, AYALEW)
To: KHARTOUM ADDIS ABABA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006